

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter defines Kinship Care and the guidelines for selection of kin and close family friends as out-of-home placement providers.

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Attachment A: Grandparents as Foster Parents Program (GAFP)

Attachment B: Options for Assisting Kinships

12.1 Definition and Purpose

Kinship care is provided by kin or non-related persons with close friendships with the parent and child. Kinship is defined as: Persons related by blood, marriage or adoption including parent, grandparent, brother, sister, half brother, half sister, stepparent, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, or first cousin. Kinship also includes those non-related persons living in one house under one head or management; or non-related persons not living together but whose lives are so intermingled that the relationship appears as one of blood relationship. Examples of non-related persons include godparents, neighbors, teachers, close family friends, and fellow church members.

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) defines kinship care as "the full-time nurturing and protection of children by kinships, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents or to whomever a child, child's parents and family members ascribe a family relationship. The relationship should be respected on the basis of individual family and cultural values, and cultural or emotional ties."

Kinship care is the least restrictive family-like setting for children requiring out-of-home placement. Children have the opportunity for continued family relationships and contact with persons, groups and institutions they were involved with while living with their parents. Kinship care reinforces the social status that comes from belonging to a family of one's own and the sense of identity and self-esteem that is inherent in knowing one's family history and culture.

Regardless of which of the five permanency options; Reunification, Adoption, Guardianship, Placement with Fit and Willing Relative, or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), is being considered for a child, kinship care is the placement of preference and should, if at all possible, be pursued prior to making any other out-of-home placement, **unless a court determines that placing a child with a relative is not in the best interest of that child(ren). Court must make specific findings on the record detailing why placement with a relative is not in the best interests of the child.** If Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative is the permanency option, the kinship

provider would obviously be a blood relative of the child. If APPLA is the permanency option, the kinship placement provider may be a non-related person.

When out-of-home care is imminent, the Children's Service Worker should ask the parent and child to identify potential kinship providers. After removal of a child from his/her home, a list of potential kinship providers should be obtained from the parents at the 72-hour Family Support Team meeting. This list and efforts to locate kin should also be documented in the narrative section of the case record and in Section III of the CS-1. Factors to consider in identifying potential kinship care providers are as follows:

1. Who would the parent and child most want to care for the child;
2. Who do parent and child most often turn to in time of crisis;
3. Who has cared for the child in the past when parents were unable to; and
4. Who does child have a close relationship with?

Note: 210.565.4 Specifies that the age of the child's relatives, shall not be the only factor taken into consideration in placement decisions recommendations to the court about placing the child with a relatives.

After identifying a potential kinship care provider, the Children's Service Worker should ask the family to describe the relationship with that individual/family, to would include the following:

1. Kin's relationship to the child and length of involvement with the family;
2. Description of the kin's involvement with the family, i.e., provided care for the child and/or parent, assisted the family through crisis, provided moral support, member of church or community organization, neighbor, etc.; and
3. Whether the kin ever resided in the home with the parent or child and, if so, how long and when.

12.2 Family Arranged Kinship Care

In some circumstances, court intervention may not be necessary to ensure the safety of a child. Family arranged kinship care may be appropriate when the parents are capable of making suitable plans to ensure the safety of the child, i.e., there is no history of disruptive behavior due to drug/alcohol use, mental illness, etc. When the parents identify a potential kinship care provider, the Children's Service Worker should take the following steps within 24 hours:

- 1) Obtain information regarding kin including: name, date and place of birth, Social Security number, address and telephone number;

- 2) Obtain a child abuse/neglect and criminal record report for all household members over the age of 17. The CA/N report may be obtained by accessing local county office computers during office hours or by calling the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline after office hours. The initial criminal report may be requested of the local law enforcement officials. All household members undergoing reviews of records need to sign an SS-6, Release of Information;
- 3) Complete the Kinship Home and Safety Checklist Form (CS-45) to determine that the environment is safe for the child(ren);
- 4) Determine if assistance is needed to monitor/restrict contact between parents;
- 5) When placing the child with a kinship care provider the Children's Service Worker must inform them of the following:
 - a) Financial assistance, benefits and services that may be available to support the child's placement; and
 - b) Support services, including training, available through Children's Division (CD) and community resources.

If, after completing the above steps, the Children's Service Worker determines court intervention is not necessary to ensure the child's safety, the worker should proceed to the next step.

- 6) Assist kin/parent in obtaining a Transfer of Custody Order, which may enable the kin to obtain financial assistance, i.e., TANF, SSI, VA, etc., medical coverage, enroll the child in school, etc. A Power of Attorney is not sufficient.
- 7) Continue to work with the family towards the goal of reunification in the family home.

12.3 Agency Arranged Kinship Care

Kinship care is preferred and should be given first consideration when court intervention is necessary to ensure the safety of the child. Preferably, the child's initial out-of-home placement will be with kin, unless the court has determined that relative placement is contrary to the best interest of the child.

NOTE: If the child is not placed with an identified relative, the court must make specific findings on the record detailing why placement with a relative is not in the best interests of the child Section 210.565.3.

Upon the removal of a child from his/her home, a list of potential kinship providers, should be obtained from the parents/or caregiver at the 72 hr meeting or before when possible. This list and efforts to locate the identified kin is also to be documented in the narrative section of the case records and on the CS-1.

When a child is placed in an agency arranged kinship placement and the placement provider is licensed, that provider will be eligible to receive a monthly maintenance rate equal to that of the traditional foster care payment, plus the \$100.00 professional parent incentive rate each month.

The following steps must be taken at the time of placement in order to facilitate an initial out-of-home placement with kin:

- 1) Obtain information regarding the kin including: name, date and place of birth, Social Security number, address and telephone number;
- 2) Per Section 210.482, RSMo, All household adult household members over the age of 17, or those under the age of 17 who have ever been certified as an adult and been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to any crime are to obtain a child abuse/neglect and criminal record report
 - a. The CA/N report may be obtained by accessing local county office computers or by calling the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline.
 - b. The division will request that a local or state law enforcement agency or juvenile officer immediately conduct a name-based criminal history record check to include full orders of protection and outstanding warrants of each person over the age of 17 residing in the home by using the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to access records maintained by the FBI.
 - c. After the name-based search has been conducted and the child has been placed with the kinship family, the worker must submit two sets of fingerprints to the Highway Patrol to be used to search the criminal history. Results of these checks will be provided to the Children's Division office that made the request.
 - 1) Any child placed in a kinship home shall be removed immediately if any person residing in the home fails to provide fingerprints after being requested to do so.
 - 2) Persons within the second degree of consanguinity (parents, siblings, and grandparents only) are not

required to do so to be licensed as a relative foster home.

- d. If the placement of a child is denied as a result of the name-based criminal check, and the denial is contested, the kinship provider has 15 business days to submit two sets of fingerprints to the Highway Patrol through the Children's Division.

Related Subject: Section 6, Chapter 3, Attachment A: Guide for Conducting Foster/Kinship Family Assessment Services for instructions on CA/N checks, fingerprinting, Case net and Family Care Safety Registry.

- e. The cost of fingerprinting shall be paid by the state.

- 3) All household members undergoing reviews of records need to sign an SS-6, Release of Information;

NOTE: Section 210.117 RSMo states that children who are taken into the custody of the state may not be reunited with a parent or placed in a home with a parent/Kin/Relative when the parent or any adult over the age of 17 residing in the home has been convicted of certain felony offenses in chapter 566 or 568.

Reference Section: 7.29. Glossary/Reference Offensives 566 and 568.

- 3) Complete the Kinship Home and Safety Checklist Form (CS-45) to determine that the environment is safe for the child(ren);
- 4) Receive the court order, ordering the child(ren) into the custody of the Children's Division;
- 5) Determine if assistance is needed to monitor/restrict contact between parents;
- 6) Before placing the child with a kinship care provider the Children's Service Worker must inform them of the following:
 - a) Their duties, rights, and role as an out-of-home placement provider including membership on the Family Support Team;
 - b) Financial assistance, benefits, and services available to support the child's placement;
 - c) The licensure process – how long it will take;
 - d) The juvenile court process and options;

- e) The permanent planning process including their membership on the Family Support Team;
 - f) Signed SS-6 is needed to contact references and share information with the Family Support Team; and
 - g) Support services, including training, available through CD and community resources.
- 7) Complete the Vendor/Licensure Placement Resource Form (SS-60), Sections A and B, making the kinship home an unclassified (UN) vendor. Send the SS-60 form to the Children's Services Payment Unit in Central Office to obtain a Departmental Vendor Number (DVN) for the kinship provider. **(Check VNME then the ZVPF screen several days after sending in the SS-60 request to see when the DVN (UN) is assigned).**
- 8) The monthly maintenance payment to the kinship provider is to be paid via a Children's Services Integrated Payment System Invoice Form (CS-65) for each child in an unlicensed kinship home during the 30-day licensure process of the home.

NOTE: Before entering a payment via the CS-65, be sure to check IPAR (IM screen) to determine if the child is receiving TANF benefits. If the child is receiving TANF benefits, close the child out of the IM case before paying through Children's Services (CSIPS).

- a) The Vendor Type is "UN".
 - b) Program Area is "AC".
 - c) Fund Category is generated automatically from SS-61.
 - d) Service Code is "MAIN".
- 9) Open an Alternative Care Client Form (SS-61) for each child placed in a kinship home. Specific instructions include the following:
- a) Field 46 – DVN is left blank.
 - b) Field 47 – Placement Type is "CTO".
 - c) Field 47 a – Placement Sub-Type is either "C – CTO Kinship" or "D – CTO Non-Kinship".
 - d) Fields 48a – 53 – Enter required CTO provider information.
 - e) Field 55 – Fund code is "12" initially.

- f) Field 56 – Maintenance should be entered as “3 – no maintenance payment”.
- g) Field 57 – Title XIX information should be entered as the date the child entered the kinship home.

10) The worker has 30 days to complete the licensure process.

However, if potential kinship providers are not identified immediately, the Children’s Service Worker must continually explore the possibility of kinship care. Once a potential kinship care provider has been identified by the parent/child, the worker must immediately (within twenty-four hours) take the following steps:

- 1) Obtain information regarding the kin including: name, date and place of birth, Social Security number, address and telephone number;
- 2) Complete the Kinship Home and Safety Checklist Form (CS-45) to determine that the environment is safe for the children’
- 3) Complete the licensure process as described below.

12.3.1 Licensure Process

Requirements for licensure of kin are the same as for foster care. The primary impetus is to allow the child to maintain family relationships in a safe environment. Licensure of kin will be determined after the Children’s Service Worker completes the following within 30 days:

- 1) Provide the kinship provider with the STARS “FOR THE CAREGIVER WHO KNOWS THE CHILD” training materials, as either a self-study or an opportunity for them to attend a group training session;

NOTE: The kinship provider must meet the following competencies:
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- Protecting and nurturing;
 - Meeting developmental needs and addressing developmental delays;
 - Supporting relationships between children and their families;
 - Connecting children to lifetime relationships; and
 - Working as a member of a professional team.
- 2) Submit **two sets of fingerprints within 15 business days of the placement** to the Missouri Highway Patrol for a more thorough criminal history report;

- 3) Obtain a child abuse/neglect report on each household member over the age of 17, documenting results to the following screens: SCLR, KDCN, IPAR, FPAR, ANUM, ANME, and AINC. Access MAPC for Child Support Enforcement data that was previously on DPAR.;
- 4) Have the family complete the paperwork to register with the Family Care Safety Registry and obtain a report to be documented in the record;
- 5) Review Case.net and document this review;

Related Subject: Section 6, Chapter 3, Attachment A, Guide for Conducting Foster/Kinship Family Assessments for instructions on Fingerprinting, Family Care Safety Registry and Case.net.

- 6) Request that the kinship providers authorize their physician to submit a statement of physical and mental health, the Foster Family Home Medical Report, CW-215. Kinship providers and all family members must be determined by a physician to be in good physical and mental health.
- 7) The Family Assessment Tool to determine that the kinship provider meets the identified competencies which were addressed in the kinship training in which they participated;
- 8) Complete a home study on the kinship caregiver, which must be conducted at the kin's residence with all caregivers present. The home study includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) Assessment of the kin's relationship with the parent and child including knowledge of circumstances/conditions which contributed to the need for out-of-home placement, kin's past efforts to help family and prevent abuse/neglect and kin's current ability to ensure the safety of the child in their own home;
 - b) Inspection of the residence to determine that the environment is safe for the children

Related Subject: Section 6, Chapter 3, Resource Family Assessment and Licensing Process.

- c) Assessment of the kin's capacity to care the child financially, physically, and emotionally (understanding of abuse/neglect, supportive, willingness to meet child's needs);

- d) Observation of the interaction between the kin, parent, and child to assess the degree of comfort and trust which exist among the parties and with agency involvement;
- e) Assessment of kin's willingness to cooperate with the treatment plan; and
- f) Five references.

9) Complete the SS-60 identifying the kinship provider as either an RHO vendor for kinship kin or FHO vendor for non-related kin.

10) Send the signed Cooperative Agreement for The Purchase of Professional Foster Care Services (CM-14) to Central Office for contract entry.

Before placing the child with a licensed kinship care provider the Children's Service Worker must inform them of the following:

- 1) Their duties, rights, and role as an out-of-home placement provider including membership on the Family Support Team.
- 2) Financial assistance, benefits, and services available to support the child's placement.
- 3) The licensure process – how long it will take.
- 4) The juvenile court process and options.
- 5) The permanent planning process including their membership on the Family Support Team.
- 6) Signed SS-6 is needed to contact references and share information with the Family Support Team.
- 7) Support services, including training, available through CD and community resources.

12.4 Placement Activities/Placement Support

The Children's Service Worker should provide the kinship provider with the following information at the time of placement:

- 1) Copy of the CS-33;
- 2) Medicaid form (IM-29) and instructions for obtaining a complete health examination;
- 3) Procedures for obtaining clothing for child, including a clothing allowance voucher if the child is in custody;

- | 4) Name and phone number of child's current school and instructions to enroll child in new school, if needed;
- | 5) Name and twenty-four hour contact telephone numbers of the worker and supervisor; and
- | 6) Inform the kinship provider of any in-service training opportunities in the area, as kinship providers will be required to receive and participate in 30 hours of in-service training every two years in order to continue to receive the \$100.00 professional parenting payment.

Upon placement, the Children's Service Worker then must:

- | 1) Immediately notify the eligibility specialist of child's placement; and
- | 2) Update the SS-61 with the new vendor information, in order to avoid unnecessary delays in financial assistance to the kinship care provider and document placement activities.

NOTE: Placement support services are equally as important in kinship care as any other type of out-of-home placement. The extent and frequency of support services will vary depending on the child's needs and the kin's capacity to meet those needs. The Children's Service Worker should not assume that the close relationship between child and kin precludes the need for regular contacts with the child and family and provision of supportive services

12.5 Renewal/Reassessment of Kinship Home

Kinship homes need to be reassessed every two years, just as with foster homes. The reassessment process will be the same as the initial licensure process, with the exception of the training component. The worker, or other designee, assigned to the family, will complete a home study of the kinship caregiver. The worker will then complete the Kinship Home and Safety Checklist Form, check and run the ZTRN screen in order to document that the required training hours have been met, and update the SS-60 in the system.

| MEMORANDA HISTORY: CS03-32; CD04-79